



By Dona Kay Renegar

LSBA Member Services Are Wide-Ranging and Far-Reaching, with More to Come!

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) is currently comprised of more than 22,700 lawyers and we continue to strive to provide premium support, services, and tools for our members to better help us practice law, maintain our businesses, and keep up with technological advances. I want to remind our members of the services the LSBA provides free of charge or for a reduced rate in hopes you can take advantage of our programs.

The LSBA offers a number of diversionary programs to help our members avoid a formal investigation from the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (ODC). The Attorney-Client Assistance Program uses our LSBA Practice Assistance Counsel to attempt to resolve minor complaints from clients about their attorneys, such as lack of communication, fee disputes, diligence, or return of a file. Since the inception of the program, there have been more than 5,756 referrals with a 90 percent success rate. Successful resolution is considered an administrative closure and no formal file is ever opened by the ODC. The LSBA diversion program also includes the following schools and workshops depending upon the underlying rule violation: Ethics School, Trust Accounting School, Law Practice Management School, Stress Management Workshop, Advertising School, and more.

The Practice Assistance and

Improvement Committee, through its link at LSBA.org, provides assistance to members navigating the disciplinary system. The site includes a video and other publications to help our members. Soon, we will be adding a searchable list of disciplinary cases on important issues.

The LSBA provides the online research tool Fastcase free to all members. It contains all cases and statutory law for the 50 states. Fastcase is accessible from a desktop computer, smart phone, or any Internet-capable device. There are user guide tutorials and **FREE** one-hour CLE webinars offered throughout the year.

The LSBA financially supports the Judges and Lawyers Assistance Program, Inc. (JLAP) which offers absolutely confidential help to our members, their families, and law students for depression, substance abuse, gambling, etc. Lawyers suffer depression at a rate triple that of the general population and substance abuse disorders at double the rate of the general population.

The Louisiana Bar Center, located at 601 St. Charles Ave. in New Orleans, offers a number of free services for our members. Bar Center conference rooms may be reserved via LSBA.org for depositions or meetings. The building is equipped with wireless Internet, and a desktop computer is available for members' use. We also offer free BlueJeans Video Conferencing services which can be accessed through any smart phone, tablet or computer with a camera. The

LSBA has cooperative agreements with our local affiliates in Shreveport, Lafayette and Baton Rouge, where video conferencing equipment has been installed. Members can make arrangements through those local affiliates to use the equipment. Reservations for the video conferencing service can be made through our website as well.

The LSBA offers free advice to our members on opening or closing your office, technology choices, personnel alternatives and solutions, document retention questions, client communication issues, and disaster or business continuity issues. We offer a **FREE** online publication about disaster planning that covers hurricanes and other possible problems such as fire, burglary, disability of a key person, a disgruntled attorney, and hacking.

The LSBA is preparing a new online publication for young lawyers about "Hanging Your Own Shingle — Louisiana Style." The materials will include a law office business plan, how to create an actual office (naming, where to locate it, office processes, etc.), attracting clients, time and billing, client communications and relations, and practice resources.

In 2017, the LSBA updated our "Practice Aid Guide: The Essentials of Law Office Management." The guide contains forms, contracts, letters, and checklists in Word so they are adaptable. We have a Tech Center on our website

that offers free training videos for popular technology tools and links to important technology topics.

The LSBA offers low-cost, one-hour seminars about office management topics on Mondays and legal technology topics on Tuesdays at the Bar Center in New Orleans. In addition, we host four **FREE** seven-hour seminars in the four corners of the state — Monroe, Shreveport, Lake Charles, and Covington. The seminars are offered annually and include lunch.

We host the LSBA Solo, Small Firm & Tech Conference each year, offering a two-day, three-track program dedicated primarily to small office practitioners and any lawyer interested in technology. The Conference satisfies your entire CLE obligation for the year and includes top legal technology exhibitors to answer any questions the attendees may have. A member recently told me that this affordable Conference is “the LSBA’s best-kept secret” and he has attended the Conference four years in a row.

The LSBA hosts a Lending Library available for your use which includes materials relating to technology, best law office management practices, setting up and closing a law office, maintaining your quality of life, and more. Simply place your order through our online form and the LSBA will send the materials to you.

For our members who need to settle fee disputes with clients or colleagues, the LSBA offers at a small fee (\$50 to \$100) an Attorney Fee Dispute Arbitration Program. The program is quick, inexpensive, informal, confidential, and final. We provide services of an Ethics Counsel who provides confidential, non-binding opinions to Louisiana attorneys.

The LSBA will sponsor approximately 38 CLE seminars during the 2017-2018 fiscal year, including out-of-state seminars in New York and Charleston. Some programming is co-sponsored with the Louisiana Judicial College, offering networking opportunities with our judges.

The LSBA administers the Client Assistance Fund which reimburses the public for losses of up to \$25,000 from the dishonest conduct of a lawyer against a client. This committee plays a large

role in the obligations we have as the last self-regulated profession in the state of Louisiana. We must police our own members to maintain the highest of ethical and professional standards.

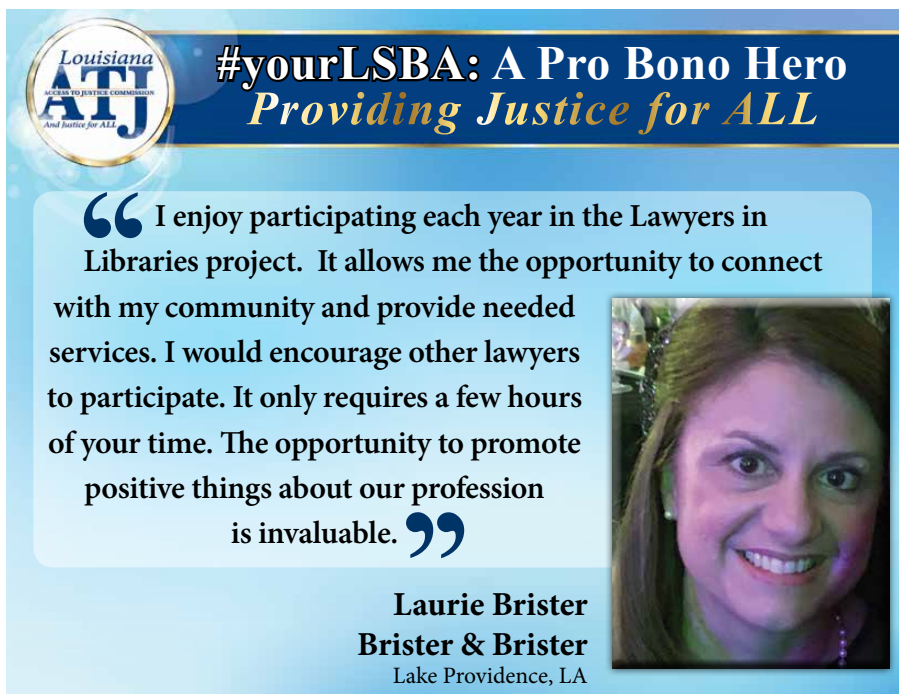
In the law schools, the LSBA has created programming to introduce professionalism to the students before they enter the profession. The LSBA hosts Professionalism Orientations during the first year in all four law schools. During the same year, the LSBA hosts Character and Fitness Programs in the law schools to educate the students on the requirements for entering the bar. During the second year of law school, the LSBA hosts bar admissions question-and-answer sessions in all four law schools to assist the students in completing their Law School Registration process with the Committee on Bar Admissions and the National Conference of Bar Examiners. Then, in the third year of law school, the LSBA sends a panel of volunteers to present video hypotheticals posing ethical and professional issues that attorneys face and discuss ways to resolve them. The LSBA is studying additional programming for law students dealing with law school debt.

There are a number of business discount services for LSBA members that are described on our website. Members

have access to the ABA Retirement Funds Program and some possible savings for insurance through GEICO. In addition, LSBA members get up to an 80 percent discount off office products (including copy and print pricing) at Office Depot. One of our members was recently quoted a price for a copying and binding job of \$287, the final cost of which was \$82 after the LSBA discount was applied. Members can save up to 26 percent on shipping with United Parcel Service. The discounts are found on the LSBA website under Member Resources, Tools and Services, Discount Services.

The LSBA has negotiated reduced rates for members at various hotels in Baton Rouge, Lafayette, New Orleans, and Shreveport. Our members also have discounted rates at the national hotel chains Holiday Inn and LaQuinta Inn & Suites.

Please visit our website or contact our staff about the many services to which you are entitled as members of the Louisiana State Bar Association. We are here to serve you and hope you find that our programming and services accomplish that goal.



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“ I enjoy participating each year in the Lawyers in Libraries project. It allows me the opportunity to connect with my community and provide needed services. I would encourage other lawyers to participate. It only requires a few hours of your time. The opportunity to promote positive things about our profession is invaluable. ”

Laurie Brister
Brister & Brister
Lake Providence, LA

